Empirical research studies are based on actual and objective observation or experimentation. They are published in peer-reviewed journals and include the following parts: **abstract, introduction / literature review, method, results, discussion / conclusion, and references.**

### Finding Empirical Studies in Library Research Databases:

- **Use search limiter functions** -- Some of the databases contain specific limiters.
  
  1. Choose the database appropriate for your field of study. (consult a subject LibGuide or Ask a Librarian)
  
  2. Limit the results to scholarly peer-reviewed articles.
  
  3. Look at all the options in the limiter menus to see if any might be useful.

    Here are a few examples for education and psychology searches.
    
    - ERIC – under the menu “Intended Audience” choose Researchers and under the menu “Publication Type” choose Reports-Research.
    - PsycINFO and PsycArticles – under the menu “Methodology” choose Empirical Study.
  
  4. Type in your topic and evaluate the articles for empirical elements criteria.

- **Use specific search terms** --
  
  1. Choose the database appropriate for your field of study. (consult a subject LibGuide or Ask a Librarian)
  
  2. Limit the results to scholarly peer-reviewed articles.
  
  3. Combine your topic with a word/phrase from Vanderbilt’s Keywords for Identifying Empirical Research. (http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/research/empirical.html)

    Make sure to use separate boxes for your topic and your empirical keywords. Don’t cram everything into one search box!
  
  4. Evaluate the articles for empirical elements criteria. Remember: not all articles in your results list will be empirical. *Judge each article carefully.*